

definable point to be reached on one or more indicators or performance measures. The table below shows key components and corresponding criteria, related to issues of quality and sustainability certification. They are based on the results of the Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council (STSC) feasibility study, (<http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/sv/stsc.html>) which was in turn based on ISO/IEC guide 65:1996, ISO14024 standard, the Mohonk Agreement, (an agreed framework and principles for the certification of ecotourism and sustainable tourism involving many international organizations <http://www.ips-dc.org/ecotourism/mohonkagreement.htm>), the Tour Operators Initiative for Sustainable Development (see Box 3.47 p. 243) and the VISIT standard for Ecolabels (http://www.yourvisit.info/public/gb/gbcont_10plus.html), while they also reflect the WTO recommendations for governments on sustainability certification. (<http://www.world-tourism.org/sustainable/doc/certification-gov-recomm.pdf>)

The indicators or criteria cited below are divided into two sets:

1. Those that can indicate the effectiveness of a certification program;
2. Those that can be used to measure progress in sustainability at a tourism business, operation or destination.

For the process-based criteria simple yes/no indicators can be used (e.g. does the enterprise have an environmental policy, does it have a program to employ local residents?) To measure the performance-based criteria more specific qualitative and quantitative indicators are needed (e.g. liters of water or kilowatt hours of energy use per guest per night). For more detail on specific indicators and measurement methods see the corresponding issue sections in Part 3. The following list of general criteria can serve as a checklist for sustainability certification programs:

| Key issues | Criteria |
|---|---|
| Criteria for effectiveness of a sustainable tourism certification program. (Based on STSC Feasibility Study, Table 7.2). | |
| Clarity of objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims and objectives of the program are clearly stated; • Criteria are in accordance with or surpass local and international standards and legislation in health, safety, consumer needs, and environmental and social performance. |
| Selectivity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria are measurable and show significant differences in environmental and social impact by certified operations; • The certification label can only be used when the criteria have been met; • Criteria are attainable and encourage best practice in benefiting tourist providers, tourists, local communities, and conservation; • Criteria are largely performance-based. |
| Consultation and transparency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria have been developed in consultation with all interested parties; • Criteria are based on sound principles of science, engineering, and social, environmental, and economic management; • Criteria are publicly available; • All stages of the development and operation of the program are transparent and free of conflicts of interest. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Non-discrimination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs are open to all applicants who comply with the criteria; • Criteria, costs, and fees permit participation by small and medium enterprises; • Technical assistance is available to applicants and awardees, but not in such a way as to establish conflicts of interest. |
| Verification | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance is verifiable by trained auditors; • Applicants provide credible evidence of compliance; • Certification is for a defined period and is retired at the end of that period if not renewed or in case of subsequent non-compliance. |
| Criteria to measure progress in sustainability at a destination. (Based on Mohonk Agreement, STSC Feasibility Study Section 7.1 and Font and Bendell, 2002). | |
| Environmental: | |
| Overall environmental protection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental management commitment by tourism business; • Environmental planning and impact assessment, considering social, cultural, ecological and economic impacts (including cumulative impacts and mitigation strategies); • Habitat/eco-system/wildlife maintenance and enhancement. Biodiversity conservation and integrity of ecosystem processes; • Mechanisms for monitoring and reporting environmental performance; • Specific standards for impacts specific to diving, golf, beaches, and other sub-sectors. |
| Energy and water consumption | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy (consumption-reduction-efficiency- sustainability of energy supply); • Water (consumption-reduction-quality). |
| Waste management (solid and water) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction through purchasing and consumption procedures; • Recycling and reuse; • Final disposal. |
| Site alteration and life cycle considerations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate building materials; • Appropriate protection of habitat and land forms (site disturbance, landscaping, rehabilitation, drainage, soils, and stormwater); • Appropriate scale of activities and infrastructure and sensitivity towards sense of place. |
| Purchasing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability of materials and supplies (recyclable and recycled materials, locally produced, certified timber products etc.); • Use of nature-friendly cleaning products; • Hazardous substances (reduction-appropriate handling). |
| Contamination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air quality and emissions; • Noise reduction; • Transport (public transport- green alternatives provided). |
| Environmental information. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation/education for customers; • Staff training, education, responsibility, knowledge and awareness in environmental aspects. |

| Sociocultural: | |
|--|---|
| Community (relations-welfare) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms to ensure rights and aspirations of local and/or indigenous people are recognized; • Emphasis and conservation of local/regional culture, heritage and authenticity; • Measures to protect the integrity of local community's social structure; • Minimize impacts upon social structures, culture, and economy (on both local and national levels); • Appropriateness of land acquisition/access / land tenure. |
| Community (participation-organization-involvement) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms to ensure that negative economic impacts on local communities are minimized and preferably there are substantial economic benefits to local communities; • Contributions to the development/ maintenance of local community infrastructure. |
| Employee training and promotion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local residents are employed, including in management positions; • Training for local employees. |
| Sociocultural information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation/education for customers; • Staff training, education, responsibility, knowledge and awareness in social and cultural aspects. |
| Economic and quality: | |
| Creation of local employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of networks of "green businesses" within a given destination; • Use of locally sourced and produced materials and food; • Use of organic food; • Supply chain management through green and sustainable purchasing policies. |
| Ethical business practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel: fair treatment; • Mechanisms to ensure labor arrangements are not exploitative, and conform to local laws or international labor standards; • Accurate, responsible marketing leading to realistic expectations. |
| Overall business competence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms for reservations, accounting, marketing, and administration. |
| Customer satisfaction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement for consumer feedback regarding quality of the tourism experience. |
| Health and safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business meets or exceeds applicable health and safety regulations. |
| Employee capacity building/ qualifications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs for training employees in both aspects of sustainability and core business practices. |

5.6.2 Validation of Indicators for Certification Programmes

There remains considerable variety in the standards, criteria and indicators in use for certification by various bodies, nationally and internationally. The sustainability certification of tourism enterprises, activities and products is still relatively new, lacking broad acceptance and use among tourism